

BIDDULPH URBAN DISTRICT

Annual Report

of

Medical Officer of Health
for 1938

Prepared by

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Medical Officer of Health
for the District

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BIDDULPH URBAN DISTRICT

1938

Section A. Statistics and Social Conditions of the Area

Area in acres	...	...	...	...	...	6647
Registrar General's estimate of resident population (middle of 1938)	...	...	...	...	...	9837
Number of Inhabited Houses (end of 1938) according to Rate Book	...	...	...	...	...	2678
Rateable Value	...	...	...	...	...	£28,689
Sum represented by a Penny Rate	...	...	...	...	...	£97·0083

Rainfall for 1938

Figures kindly supplied by Mr. Ostick, Clerk and Steward
at Biddulph Grange Orthopædic Hospital

January ...	4·56	April ...	0·24	July ...	3·38	October ...	4·52
February ...	1·16	May ...	2·45	August ...	3·36	November	4·09
March ...	1·13	June ...	2·60	September	2·74	December	4·46

Total Rainfall for year : 34·69 inches.

Social Conditions.

Employment was not so good as in the previous year but the December "count" showed almost exactly the same figures as in December 1937. The "live" register numbered about 950 in the Biddulph District. As the Insured population numbers about 3590, this shows a percentage much the same as in the previous year. The permanently unemployed consist of 475 men and 100 women. The composition of this "hard core" in the case of men has changed in recent years. Formerly it was chiefly made up of ironworkers who, very often middleaged and over, had their employment taken away by the closure and subsequent demolition of the Biddulph Ironworks. Many of these men have now reached 65 years, and have become entitled to pension. As a result, the bulk of the permanently unemployed is now composed of men previously employed in and about the coal mines, and 60—75% of them are over 45 years of age.

Work in the mines was not so good as in 1937. Quarrying was better. Engineers were fully employed, but moulders not fully so. Building was slack, as the number of new houses fell by 100 as compared with a couple of years ago. Velvet cutting was worse than it has ever been in recent years. Only one mill was open and that was on short time all through the year.

The Mutual Service Club helps to solve the question of what to do with leisure hours, both for employed and unemployed. There are now about 200 members, of whom almost one half are women.

For men there are 2 classes, both in charge of expert instructors. Monday for woodwork ; Tuesday for boot and shoe repairing. Darts,

table tennis, draughts, ring-board, billiards and snooker, are provided as recreations.

For women there are also two classes, both under efficient teachers. On Tuesday evening, physical training ; and on Thursday evening sewing and dressmaking.

Socials, teas, and parties are also organised. Whist Drives are held on Friday and Saturday. Once a month a Concert is given in the club to Blind People in Biddulph and surrounding districts.

The Biddulph Branch of the British Legion has a membership of about 180, and of these some 120 are employed. The others are incapacitated by various disabilities, or in some cases by the lack of opportunities for work. The women's section looks after the wives and families of those who are in need of help. Last year about £300 was distributed among ex-service men and their families, this assistance not being restricted to those who were members of the Branch.

Under the management of a salaried librarian, the number of readers on the register continue to increase. I had hoped that now library books are used so freely for reading, many more who avail themselves of this facility might have taken a step forward and joined the W.E.A. classes. The attendance at the classes is disappointing so far as numbers are concerned. But the class members are most regular in attendance, and the discussions show an intelligent interest in the subjects chosen. Now that grants are available to cover the costs of attending short summer courses at various noted centres, Oxford, Bangor, and Chester ; it will be rather grieving should these opportunities be entirely neglected. It is to be hoped that with a little more publicity these classes may increase in size.

Vital Statistics (S.D. 30)

Causes of Death in Biddulph Urban District 1938

						Males.	Females
All Causes	...	...	...	...	...	43	53
Measles	...	...	...	...	...	—	1
Diphtheria	...	...	...	...	...	1	—
Tuberculosis of Respiratory System	...	...	...	...	...	—	2
Other Tuberculosis	...	...	...	...	...	1	3
Cancer	...	...	...	...	...	4	10
Diabetes	...	...	...	...	...	—	2
Cerebral Hæmorrhage, etc.	...	...	...	...	...	5	3
Heart Disease	...	...	...	...	...	16	12
Other Circulatory Diseases	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
Bronchitis	...	...	...	...	...	1	2
Pneumonia	...	...	...	...	...	3	1
Other Respiratory Diseases	...	...	...	...	...	—	1
Peptic Ulcer	...	...	...	...	...	—	1
Cirrhosis of Liver	...	...	...	...	...	—	1

Vital Statistics—continued

						Males.	Females
Other Digestive Diseases	...	...	...	—		2	
Acute and Chronic Nephritis	...	...	...	3		3	
Puerperal Diseases other than puerperal sepsis	...	...	...	—		1	
Congenital Debility, Premature Birth, etc.	...	...	...	3		1	
Senility	...	...	...	1		1	
Violence (other than suicide)	...	...	...	1		—	
Other defined diseases	...	...	...	2		5	
Ill-defined or not known	...	...	...	1		—	

In addition to the above, there is on the list supplied to me, a male death from Encephalitis Lethargica, but as I have no record of this disease and cannot trace any such case, it is omitted from the above table.

Extracts from Vital Statistics for 1938

Live Births.	Legitimate	...	^M 91	^F 94
	Illegitimate	...	—	1
			91	95

Total Live Births ... 186. Birth-rate = 18·9 per 1000.

Still Births .. 12. Legitimate ^M 4 ^F 6 (plus 2 sex unstated)

Rate per 1000 (live and still births) = 66

Deaths ... 96. ^M 43 ^F 53 Crude Death-rate = 9·759 per 1000

Applying the areal comparability factor (1·13) Death-rate = 11·02

Deaths from puerperal causes : Puerperal Sepsis ... 0

Other puerperal causes ... 1

Rate per 1000 total (live and still) births ... 5·05

Deaths of Infants under 1 year of age ... 8

All Infants per 1000 live births ... 43

Legitimate Infants per 1000 legitimate live births ... 43

Illegitimate Infants per 1000 illegitimate live births ... 0

Deaths from Cancer (all ages) ... 14

„ „ Measles (all ages) ... 1

„ „ Whooping Cough (all ages) ... 0

„ „ Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age) ... 0

Deaths under 1 year of age, 1938

No.	Sex		Age	Cause of Death	Date of Death
	M	F			
1	...	1	1 week ...	cardiac failure—bronchitis	23rd Feby
2	...	1	4 months ...	intussusception—operation	6th July
3	1	...	2 days ...	encephalocele—spina bifida	12th Sept.
4	...	1	5 months ...	meningitis—erysipelas	4th Dec.
5	1	...	2 days ...	prematurity—twin	4th „
6	1	...	3 days ...	do. do.	5th „
7	...	1	8 months ...	tuberculous peritonitis	7th „
8	...	1	1 minute ...	prematurity	16th „

It is peculiar that only 1 of these deaths occurred during the first 6 months of the year, while no less than 5 occurred during the last month.

Section B. General Provision of Health Services for the Area.

1. Public Health Officers of the Authority.

- (i) James Craig, M.B. Edinburgh, M.R.C.S. England,
Medical Officer of Health (not in general practice)
S. Gibson, Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector.
- (ii) (b) Ambulance facilities. These seem to be quite adequate but
no arrangements have been made for their co-ordination.
- (c) There is no provision for nursing in the home but a pro-
posal has been made to form a nursing association and
this is to be considered by the Council.

Section C. Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.

(i) **WATER.** During the year the supplies from springs and wells gradually failed until there was a diminution of about a third as compared with the normal. The yield of the Elmhurst well fell from 10,000 gallons per hour to about 7,300 gallons, which involved extra pumping. But at no time was the district short of water.

Our various water supplies were analysed in February, and samples showed the presence of organisms which proved to be the Intermediate type 1 of the coliform group. I was assured from the Laboratory that they were not in themselves dangerous, but that they showed remote rather than recent pollution, and that a thorough topographical survey of the supply should be made. The Surveyor and myself gave much time and thought to this problem. We both went over the ground repeatedly. Mr. Gibson is of course conversant with drains and tanks in that area. Personally I also explored the area towards the top of the gathering ground. But we found nothing and were literally in an impasse. In the end Mr. Hutchinson suggested that we should chlorinate the well and the pumps. This was done, and the trouble disappeared and has not so far recurred.

Many bacteriological examinations were made until in March the Elmhurst well was found to be practically free from contamination. Wishing to be reassured on this point I had further samples examined in June and the results are appended.

County Bacteriological Laboratory, Martin Street, Stafford

Report on Bacteriological Examinations of Samples of Water submitted on
23rd June 1938 by Biddulph Urban District Council.

From ELMHURST WELL

COUNT. On nutrient agar after 48 hours incubation at 37° c. 5 colonies per ml
On nutrient agar after 72 hours incubation at 20-22° c. 11 cols. per ml
COLI AEROGENES CONTENT (presumptive coli) none per 100 ml after 48 hours
incubation at 37° c.

From ELMHURST WATER MAIN

COUNT. On nutrient agar after 48 hours incubation at 37° c. 3 colonies per ml
On nutrient agar after 72 hours incubation at 20-22° c. 8 cols. per ml
COLI AEROGENES CONTENT (presumptive coli) none per 100 ml after 48 hours
incubation at 37° c.

These samples show no bacteriological evidence of recent sewage pollution.

J. MENTON, Bacteriologist.

(ii) **DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE** :—During the year the necessary financial arrangements entailed by the proposed Sewerage schemes were under consideration by the Council. Otherwise there is nothing to report.

2. **RIVERS AND STREAMS** :—No action taken.

Section D. Housing.

1938 saw a great diminution in the number of houses erected. The following table shows the rise and fall of building activity in Biddulph. It also indicates the problems with which we have somewhat suddenly been confronted in the matter of water supply, drainage and sewerage.

New assessments in year	1931 - 2	...	...	10	
"	"	"	1932 - 3	...	41
"	"	"	1933 - 4	...	117
"	"	"	1934 - 5	...	149
"	"	"	1935 - 6	...	141
"	"	"	1936 - 7	...	138
"	"	"	1937 - 8	...	59
"	"	"	1938 - 9	...	38

In 8 years there has been an addition of 693 houses.

The number of "voids" has diminished and now averages between 20 and 25.

1. Inspection of Dwelling-houses during the Year :—

1 (a)	Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	45
(b)	Number of inspections made for the purpose	96
2 (a)	Number of dwelling-houses (included under sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925 and 1932	—
(b)	Number of inspections made for the purpose	—
3	Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	1
4	Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation)	26

2. Remedy of defects during the year without Service of formal Notices :

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers	31
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3. Action under Statutory Powers during the Year :—Nil.

4. Housing Act, 1936. Part IV. Overcrowding:—

(a).—(i) Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year	52
(ii) Number of families dwelling therein	56
(iii) Number of persons dwelling therein	370
(b).—Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during year	0
(c).—(i) Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year	4
(ii) Number of persons concerned in such cases	48

Section E. Inspection and Supervision of Food.

(a) MILK SUPPLY.—The inspection of milk is carried out by the County Council. Farms and dairies were inspected during the year and alterations and improvements required in certain instances. The County Inspector periodically inspects Cowsheds and Dairies and is satisfied with the general conditions which have undoubtedly been much improved in recent years.

(b) MEAT AND OTHER FOODS :— Slaughter houses are regularly inspected and shops kept under observation. No food is sold from stalls or vehicles. The meat supplied is of good quality.

ANIMALS EXAMINED DURING THE YEAR :—

Cattle, including Cows and Calves	...	...	282
Sheep and Lambs...	...	...	827
Pigs	...	...	500

Sanitary Inspector's Report, 1938.

WATER. The supply to the district has been well maintained during the year and satisfactory both in quality and quantity.

Minor extensions to mains were made.

Practically the whole of the district is now within the area of supply and on no occasion during the year has it been found necessary to curtail the supply to the consumers.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE :— Several extensions to sewers have been laid during the year. It is anticipated the new Schemes will be well in hand during the next year and all new properties brought into the system.

RIVERS AND STREAMS :—These are under the constant supervision of the County Inspector and no serious pollution has been brought to our notice during the year.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION :—

Approved Water Closets	...	...	493
Waste Water and hand flushed Closets	...	...	1
Privies—Pail System	...	...	1283
Privies converted to Water Closets	...	...	0
Pails converted to Water Closets	...	...	4

As soon as the new sewerage system is brought into operation it is intended to set up a conversion scheme and during the next two or three years as a result of this course the numbers of pail closets will be very considerably reduced.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA :—

Inspections during the year	...	...	...	240
Notices served—Statutory	...	...	...	Nil
„ „ Informal	...	...	...	35

SMOKE ABATEMENT :—No industrial smoke nuisance is known to exist in the district.

SHOPS AND OFFICES :—No action has been necessary.

CAMPING SITES :—

1. There are no camping sites in the district.
2. No licences issued.
3. Except an isolated tent of Scouts no campers have been resident.

SWIMMING BATHS AND POOLS.—

- (a) None in existence.
- (b) No baths or pools are open to the Public.

ERADICATION OF BED BUGS :—No report has been received of the existence of bed bugs.

SCHOOLS :—The water supply to all the Schools has been satisfactory and the sanitary conditions at all the Schools are good. There are no Schools in the area other than those administered by the County Education Committee.

Section F. Prevalence & Control over Infectious & other Diseases

2. The number of notifications of Infectious Diseases received was 123, practically the same number as in 1937 (126). Scarlet Fever at 31 was about equal to 34 in the previous year. The figures for pneumonia, 21, were almost exactly half of 1937 (44). The disease making the largest contribution to the Register was diphtheria, 60 notifications, as against 42 in 1937. This number includes "carriers" as well as cases of clinical diphtheria. Also one girl was notified 3 times, and admitted to hospital on each occasion. This occurred twice in 2 other cases.

These numbers led to overpressure on the Joint Hospital at West Heath, and 3 cases—all of scarlet fever, were sent to Hospitals belonging to neighbouring authorities.

Diphtheria

In my report for 1937 I referred to some cases of diphtheria which had occurred on 22nd - 23rd December, just as the Schools were closing for the Christmas holidays. Cases continued to occur during the holidays, and also after the Schools re-opened. These were chiefly, but not altogether, in the girls and infants departments. They were not limited to any one class or age. The County school medical service concentrated on the schools, and all children whose throats showed anything abnormal were swabbed. It was also decided to immunise all children from 5 to 8 years of age, whose parents consented to this being done. The majority of parents consented. Concurrently with this, infants of from 1 to 5 years attending the Welfare Centre were immunised, if the parents wished this to be done. No child under 1 year of age was done. The material used was Burroughs, Wellcome's T.A.F., 3 injections at fortnightly intervals.

Immunity does not develop for some months after the treatment and I was perhaps unduly impatient in the matter, but up to the end of the year only one immunised child was notified as diphtheria, and in her case swabbing proved negative. It was rather remarkable how the disease picked out children who for one reason or another had not been immunised. There was one death, a boy of six, who was attacked by measles, and in a few days developed diphtheria. He had not been immunised. We have too many cases of diphtheria in the district, but deaths are very rare, no doubt because diphtheria antitoxin is promptly used.

24 Library Books which had been issued to the households subsequently affected by diphtheria, were called in and sent to the County Laboratory for examination. No C. diphtheria was recovered from any specimen. All but one showed staphylococcus albus, the one exception, appropriately enough, being "Pride and Prejudice!" Staphylococcus citreus and aureus, Bacillus proteus, B. subtilis, also moulds, were found in some volumes. B. coli was found in three volumes, and these were destroyed.

The following figures, for which I am indebted to Dr. Leader, at that time S.M.O. for this district, and now M.O.H. for Stone, show

the work done towards immunisation. Also towards end of the year all the children whose immunisation dated back at least 6 months were Schick tested.

Total Immunised (schools and welfare) ...	401
Total Schick Tested	270
Of these Schick Positive ...	7

That is 1·7% of total (up to date) have been found to be Schick positive or 2·59% of those Schick tested were found to be Schick positive.

NOTE. Of the 7 positives, 5 gave combined pseudo and positive reactions, while 2 were completely positive. All the reactors received another I.C.C. T.A.F.

Of the 401 immunised, 69 were—

(a) pre-school children all over 1 year of age.

None of these were Schick tested.

(b) The 332 school children immunised were all in attendance at the various Infant Schools in the district: Central, North, Knypersley and Biddulph Moor. The positives were: Central 4, North 1, Knypersley 1, and Biddulph Moor 1.

Biddulph Moor Infants School was closed June 16—July 4 for measles

The case of cerebro-spinal fever, a woman of 36, was promptly treated by serum, and removed to hospital, where she recovered.

The child with poliomyelitis was also treated in hospital.

Pneumonia cases (21) were less in number. I am unable to say how many went to hospital.

The puerperal pyrexia cases were both treated in hospital, and both recovered. Their ages were 22 and 30.

No case of ophthalmia neonatorum was notified.

One notification of suspected anthrax in cattle was received from the Police authorities, but cancelled after veterinary inspection.

4. (a) Prevention of Blindness. No action taken.

(b) Tuberculosis. No action necessary.

Biddulph Grange Orthopaedic Hospital

Number of Schick Tests 111.	Immunised 19
Number of Dick Tests 102.	Immunised 35

Notifiable Diseases (other than Tuberculosis) during the year 1938

Disease	Total Cases notified	Admitted to Hospital	Deaths
Scarlet Fever	31	21	...
Diphtheria	60	54	1
Puerperal Pyrexia	2	2	...
Pneumonia	21	?	4
Erysipelas	7	1	1
Acute Poliomyelitis	1	1	...
Cerebro-spinal fever	1	1	...

Tuberculosis - new cases and mortality during 1938

AGE PERIODS			NEW CASES				DEATHS			
			Respiratory		Non-respiratory		Respiratory		Non-respiratory	
			M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
1	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	1
5	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...
15	...	...	...	1	1	1	...	1	...	...
25	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	1
35	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
45	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
55	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
65 and upwards	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Totals			0	4	1	5	0	2	0	3

The above New Cases, all notified, represent all the cases which came to my notice during the year. But on the Inward Transfers for the last quarter of the year received in March, I found two deaths, both from tuberculous peritonitis; one an infant of 8 months who died in a hospital outside my area, and the other a young married woman of 25 years who died in her parents' house just outside my boundary, and in whose case the disease ran a very rapid course. Neither of these cases had been notified. As the total deaths were five, these two deaths represent a ratio of 40 per cent of non-notified tuberculosis deaths; an unfortunate result, as notification is well carried out in Biddulph, and but for these two cases was complete.

Analysis of the total notified cases under age-groups

Age Periods	Scarlet Fever	Diphtheria		Pneumonia	Puerperal Pyrexia	Erysipelas	Cerebro- spinal Fever	Acute Polio- myelitis
		M	F					
Under 1 year	1	...	...
1
2	...	1	4	3	...	...	...	...
3	...	3	1	4	1	...	...	...
4	...	3	2	3	...	...	...	...
5	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	1
10	...	13	7	13	2	...	...	...
15	...	6	2	8	...	1	...	...
20	...	2	2	3	2	...	...	...
35	...	2	...	4	3	1	1	...
45	1	1	3	...	...	...
65 and over	9	...	4	...	...
Totals	31	20	40	21	2	7	1	1

Diphtheria Cases total 60. Have separated the sexes, showing that the female notifications were exactly twice the males.

County Bacteriological Laboratory, Stafford

Report on Specimens sent from Biddulph

1938	No. of Swabs Throat and Nose	Diphtheria Bacillus	No Bacteria Bacillus	Streptococcus	Staphylococcus	Yeasts
January ...	80	7	69	1	...	3
February ...	19	1	18	...	...	...
March ...	23	3	18	...	1	1
April ...	14	2	12	...	...	...
May ...	12	...	12	...	...	...
June ...	6	2	4	...	...	...
July ...	10	...	10	...	...	...
August ...	7	3	4	...	...	...
September ...	9	5	4	...	...	...
October ...	28	6	22	...	...	...
November ...	15	2	13	...	...	...
December ...	13	2	11	...	...	...
Totals	236	33	197	1	1	4

Form 124 E

School Notifications of Actual or Suspected Illness, and Contacts

School	Mumps	Scarlet Fever	Diphtheria	Measles	Chicken pox	Totals
Biddulph Central Boys ...	...	...	6	...	...	6
Girls ...	...	...	3	...	...	3
Infants ...	5	6	2	...	...	13
Knypersley Mixed ...	5	4	6	...	1	16
Infants ...	2	1	...	19	...	22
Biddulph Moor Mixed ...	...	1	...	9	...	10
Infants ...	1	...	...	28	...	29
Totals	13	12	17	56	1	99

Biddulph Maternity and Welfare Centre, 1938.

Attendance at Centre (Wednesday)

Children under 1 year ...	...	...	...	642
„ 1 to 5 years ...	...	...	...	969
Total attendances				<u>1611</u>
Examined by Doctor ...	...	...	...	945

Health Visiting.

Children under 1 year ...	...	...	...	717
„ 1 to 5 years ...	...	...	...	1522
Expectant Mothers ...	...	...	...	62
				<u>2301</u>

NURSE WHITAKER.

Ante-natal Clinic and Welfare Centre (Thursday)

Expectant Mothers—First attendances	...	46
Total attendances	...	153
Examined by Doctor	...	153
Children—First attendances under 1 year	...	56
„ „ between 1 and 5 years	...	15
Total	...	<u>71</u>
Total attendances—under 1 year	...	586
between 1 and 5 years	...	804
Total	...	<u>1390</u>
Examined by Doctor	...	916

Health Visiting.

Expectant Mothers	...	41
Children under 1 year	...	900
„ between 1 and 5 years	...	1430
		<u>2371</u>

NURSE TURNER.

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health

for the year 1938

for the Urban District of Biddulph, in the County of Stafford

On the administration of the Factory and Workshop Act, 1901, and the
Factories Act, 1937 (which superseded the Act of 1901 on 1st July 1938)

1. INSPECTIONS for purposes of provisions as to health.

Including Inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors.

Premises	Number of		
	Inspections	Written Notices	Occupiers Prosecuted
Factories with mechanical power ...	20	...	...
Factories without mechanical power ..	8	...	...
Other Premises under the Act ... (including works of building and engineering construction but not including outworkers' premises)	60	...	...
Total ...	88	...	...

2. DEFECTS FOUND. Nil

Outwork in Unwholesome Premises (Section 108) Nil

(Signed) *James Craig,*
Medical Officer of Health.

6th April 1938

